

CB014 - How To Add Value To another's Life Special Interview With Virginia Phillips

Hi everyone, welcome to another exciting episode of Confidence Bytes and I'm really honoured today to have as a special guest, Virginia Phillips from Triumph After Trauma... Triumph After Trauma Academy and she's got some wonderful things to share with you.

But first let me just tell you a little bit about her.

So:

Virginia Phillips is a communication and leadership expert. She is the owner of Triumph after Trauma Academy, an inspirational speaker, a personal coach, a survivor, and an author. Her Entrepreneur Success Academy is changing the landscape of small business coaching.

Virginia's professional experience includes years of leading teams and business management advising. She earned a master's degree in Human Resource Management along with certifications in leadership, human resources, and meditation, sorry mediation.

Despite significant life snags, she sees life as a journey; discovering opportunities to enhance the lives of others. Her hunger for life is impressive and her life story is inspiring.

And when Virginia isn't looking for ways to make the world a better place; she spends her time hiking, writing, and traveling.

And Virginia, welcome and thank you very much for coming.

Virginia:

Thank you

Stuart:

That's a very , very impressive resume.

Virginia:



It's an honour to be here, it's an honour to have your listeners listen to us for the time that they're given us.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Well, it's about half an hour or a little bit longer depending on how long it takes, you know, to give the information that's going to help them. And I know you've got some wonderful stories to tell us so could you just tell us a little bit more about yourself.

Virginia:

Sure. I grew up in the United States and have lived all over the United States and worked for 'Corporate America' as I refer to it as...

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

...In the human resources field and that field means I help managers lead better and employees be more successful.

And through that career I wound up in Europe for several, several years and I had the opportunity to work with what we would refer to as 'Local Nationals' over there which means I, I really went to work with citizens from Europe.

And it was just a wonderful experience for me to bring that culture and understand how other cultures work and live, er, besides in America.

And then several years ago I moved back to the United States and started my own business.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

And, you know, obviously this show is about confidence. Emmm, do you have any stories you like to tell us about confidence struggles or anything like that?



Virginia:

Oh certainly. I think everybody suffers with lack of confidence from time to time...

Stuart:

Ja

Virginia:

...And some of us suffer more than others.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

And that goes back to who we are as human beings. Some of our DNA, er, charges us to be a little more cautious as you may, and if we have that type of DNA in us that causes us to more cautious we're not as confident when we go out into the world...

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

...But a lot of the confidence issues have to do with previous experience, environments people are in, maybe they're in a very harsh work environment or harsh home life environment and your body internalises that and it's, it's difficult to stay happy and difficult to stay confident in who you are when your environment has so much that tells us we shouldn't be confident.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

You know, I look around the world and there are so many nations at war and I don't know how the kids in those cultures grow up to be confident human beings when they're worried about their next meal.



And...

Stuart:

Yes, I suppose they become 'comfortable' in that limited environment but outside of it then they have a lot of different issues don't they?

Virginia:

They do.

So my own personal struggles really have to revolve around my health. I have not been the healthiest individual, er, so school, I missed a lot of school as a kid and so getting good grades in school and being successful in school was tough for me.

And it was always nerve-wracking for me to succeed in school because I just wasn't there enough...

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

...to feel confident in grasping the material that was being taught to me. And when you miss so much of school, that is your foundation to your work...

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

...and to you living it's really hard then to go out into the work world saying "I've got this, I know what I'm doing" - because I missed so much of that foundation.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

And what it, what it allowed me to do with that confidence, err, lack of confidence is I just worked harder.



Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

I worked harder to fill in those gaps that I missed when I was a kid because I was so sick.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

So you're saying that, em, you found a way to compensate for the circumstances.

Virginia:

Abs, absolutely and I think a number of us do...

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

...that have environmental factors or personal factors that aren't our strongest pieces of us.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

We certainly can, you know, compensate in, in many ways, and one of the things I see people compensating in is just working harder.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:



Putting in more effort, finding the latest tool or finding a mentor that can mentor them on the pieces that maybe they missed previously.

Stuart:

Yeah

Virginia:

And there are mentors around the world...

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

...that can support them. Even in your case, you know, you do a lot of teaching in English to, to folks around the world really and so they know that is a piece that will make them more confident in this world so they go out and get that and add that their experiences.

Stuart:

Yeah, and I think that, that, you know, mentorship is important but it's not just limited to one key area because, you know, if, you know, if we just take teaching as an example. It's ok having a mentor in English but, you know, if you, even if you know English you may need somebody to help you have the confidence to use it and to accept that you have those extra skills and, you know, maybe mentor you in different life skills that maybe you've missed.

In your experience do you think that erm, the fact that you weren't at school erm, hampered you a little bit with your communication abilities with the other students because you weren't able to interact as much as they were?

Virginia:

Oh I'm certain in many respects it did, er, you know, they, they were on one page in terms of what we had learned and I'm so far behind where they are at, it's almost, at times we didn't speak the same language.

Stuart:

Yah



Virginia:

And it's really hard to, to interact with the world when you feel like you're just so far behind than everybody else.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

Er, and so one of the things I did also to build my self confidence is I found people that were also challenged but really succeeded...

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

And they didn't have to be in my life but they're inspirational stories all over this world.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

People that have come from almost nothing doing amazing things. Figure who they are, really learn their story and then internalise that saying "if they can do it I can do it too"

Stuart:

I can do it, yeah.

Mm hmm

So why is it then that you think that some people struggle with confidence more than others? I mean there must be something in their makeup or something along that way that affects them.



Virginia:

I, I do think it, it has, erm, a lot to do with personality types...

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

...there are personality types that are much more analytical

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

And personality types that are much more driven and much more willing to take risk and just plough through whatever challenges...

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

So I think personality types has a lot to do with it but our environment has a lot to do with it. There's a lot of studies between men and women that the way our environment treats women really has them questioning their self confidence.

Stuart:

Yah, I mean, I was just reading something last week, erm, about the way a lot of firms in the UK, especially, are, erm, hampering women because of the dress codes that they're forcing them to adhere to. You know, they're not allowed to express themselves and, you know, it, it's ridiculous in many ways, you know.

Virginia:

Right.

Right, but even, you know, on the TV here earlier today I heard them wishing a woman a happy birthday. It's her 45th, I think birthday...



Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

...and they called her a little girl.

Now that's how, how does that help those of us that are watching that interaction feel confidence as a woman?

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

If we're referred to as little girls?

Stuart:

Yeah, and it, it's these, these little things isn't it that just keep coming in, coming in, coming in, coming in all the time. Just like, you know, a parent might or a teacher might say you're stupid, you're never going to learn anything, you're never going to amount to anything to much.

It comes in enough times and then it becomes the, the reality, that they face every day.

Virginia:

Exactly.

And I think that there is more of that in our environments than most of us realise.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

And when you study that, and your ears are tuned to that you really begin to question how much of our environment drives our lack of confidence.

Stuart:



Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

You know, we have a big commercial store here in the United States called Target.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

And a little girl wrote Target and she said she didn't like the way the toys were displayed.

The boys toys were often, erm, more earthy toned...

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

...and more, you know, war toys and architectural toys and really driven to build the confidence of these young boys. Whereas the girls, it was a lot of dolls, dress up dolls and fashion.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

And this young girl said "Why can't we have the architectural toys?"

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

"Why do they always have to be aimed at the boys?"



Stuart:

Yah, I mean this type of programming starts at a very, very young age doesn't it?

Virginia:

It does.

Stuart:

You know, I mean, if, if you just take that example, a lot of parents, they don't expect their girls to play with the boys toys. They expect, don't expect the guys to play with the g, dolls. You know, these are for the girls and these are for the guys and there is some merit in having that type of thing but when it's always directed - the girls can only have 'this' or the boys can only have 'this' then you get issues that come from that don't you?

Virginia:

Right.

But it's more than that. In many cultures around the world the boys will go off and fish with their father, the food, and bring home the food and that's very rewarding and the women are left home to clean the floors only for the men to come home and serve them with what they've caught.

And there is a lot of ingrained expectations...

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

...out of the boys and out the girls in those specific circumstances.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

Erm... go ahead.



Stuart:

No, I was just going to say that this becomes a big cultural thing doesn't it and it's very, very difficult to, you know, change it and it won't change quickly because it's culture in a lot of instances.

Virginia:

Very much so.

You know, the other thing that we look at with confidence is hormones.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

There's something about testosterone in the men, women also have testosterone but men tend to have a little more than the women do and I will tell you that testosterone is really good for self confidence.

Stuart:

Yes, no, I, I understand it is...

(Virginia laughs)

So, you know, even, even a guy who's suffering from that, from a lack of testosterone he will probably suffer from a lack of confidence in many ways.

Virginia:

Yes.

Stuart:

And you know, I think this is in some ways where this feeling of being emasculated, you know, comes from because there's a lack of hormones.

Virginia:

Right.



But I don't want the men listening to this thinking that they also can't suffer from a lack of confidence.

Stuart:

No. I mean. The funny thing about confidence is, is you can be confident in one area...

Virginia:

Oh, yes.

Stuart:

...But in another area you can be just totally, totally go to pieces. I mean, you can take a, erm, a person who is, for instance, a very good leader but if he has to give a speech in public, just like 'The King's Speech', you know, he goes to pieces, he just goes to pieces. He doesn't have the confidence to speak in public but every other aspect is perfect.

Virginia:

And some of that is to do with experience, you know, if you were to put a piano in front of me and asked me to play a beautiful piece it, it would terrify me. I've never done very good with instruments.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

And most folks that are introduced to an instrument, they're not good at the beginning but you give them practice and over the time they practice they get a little better, and a little better and a little better and they develop incredible confidence.

Stuart:

Ja, but then again you still have the performance anxiety that comes in (laughs) don't you? Because they can play the piece to their friends or to themselves but when they have to go in front of the teacher or the public then the performance anxiety comes in and all their confidence goes away.



I mean, Marilyn Monroe and many other stars had this problem. That they were very confident in their abilities and everything else but when it came to the real crunch time then they had big issues that they had to fight to get over before they could really let themselves be the person that they knew they could. So...

Virginia:

And I agree. And some of that is really experience, but some of that has to do with the fears in our head.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm. Ja, I mean it can come from a very young age, it can come from society, it can come from so many different places and then we build it don't we? We create it.

Virginia:

We, we do. And, you know, part of our human beings is that fight or flight response...

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

And when we're proficient in playing the piano we have a fight response but when we're put in front of an audience that brings a fear response, we want to run.

Stuart:

And, you know, that can also come from failure can't it?

Virginia:

Yes.

Stuart:

That you've made mistakes before. So how can you turn those mistakes into a positive aspect of your life?

Virginia:



Well I will tell you there's so many people in this world that have created inventions that we rely on today that were out of mistakes.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

Er, the microwave is one of them, the X-Ray machine is one of them, er, and we all rely on that and that came through mistakes. One of my favourite mistakes is by a cook in China who discovered fireworks.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

He wasn't planning for his pan to explode but it did and somebody felt well this is really great so your perception of a mistake may end up leading to something great.

Stuart:

Yeah, and it's that perception which is, is, is crucial isn't it? And, you know, we're not saying that someone should set their kitchen on fire (laughs) just to find a, you know, new invention.

But, you know, (laughs) it is, it's the perception that 'this is wrong' or 'I failed' that, you know, the perception needs to be changed - "OK, great, I've made a mistake. What can I learn from it?"

And if we can change that thinking around then we can profit from the mistakes can't we?

Virginia:

And, and there are a number of really, really successful people that made significant mistakes early on in their career. Uhhh, you have Oprah Winfrey who was fired.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.



Virginia:

You have, umm, Walt Disney who was told he didn't have any imagination and nobody needed him. Do you think he suffered from confidence? You bet he did.

Stuart:

Yes, but he didn't stop it...

Virginia:

Go ahead.

Stuart:

He didn't let it stop him though did he?

Virginia:

He didn't.

And, you know, so we have those types of things that you could internalise as failures...

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

But he didn't let it stop him. There are other events that people really do, you know, I could trip up my stairs here and I would see that as a failure. But the fact that I got up and didn't let it stop me shows that I have courage, determination and that builds character.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm. And you know

Virginia:

People respect that.

Stuart:



Yah and it, it's, you're saying about tripping up and not letting it stop you and it just takes you back to childhood.

How many times does a young baby fall over when it's learning to walk?

Virginia:

I think the stat is like a thousand times or something like that.

Stuart:

Yeah, and it doesn't stop it.

Ok, it needs the encouragement that it's going to be ok but it doesn't stop it because most people learn to walk, you know, there are maybe a few who don't.

Virginia:

And the environment around that baby trying to walk is parents and other people picking them up and saying it's ok.

Stuart:

It's that support structure isn't it? That mentor?

Virginia:

Yah.

Well, in, in a support group you know, when I talk to folks about overcoming trauma or change, the number one thing they say to keep them going down that road is the people around them encouraging them to do it.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm. It is.

Virginia:

And we do that for the little babies trying to walk...

Stuart:



Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

...But at some point that support changes when we become an adult. But if you have the one friend or the five friends or the fifteen friends that say "It's ok, keep going." you're more likely to have the confidence to do it.

Stuart:

Yeah, and you say that changes, you know, sometimes people perceive that you're an adult so you don't need support any more, because you should be able to handle this.

But everybody needs support don't they?

Whether it's from a friend a mentor or whatever.

And, you know, we also have to be careful with the support we get whether it's, erm, biased support, you know, you know, when, you know, you have some friends, very close friends who are using you as the, erm, the ladder or the sounding board because, you know, they can always be better than you in some way and this is a very, very subtle thing...

But you go to them for support or with a genuine question and they say "No, don't do that. You shouldn't do that." you know, "It won't work." because then they are the person who suffers if they get successful.

So their support becomes biased and we've got to be very careful who we go to for the support don't we?

Virginia:

We do. There, there's an example I learned from one of my mentors and he, he did a lot of crab fishing and in crab fishing you put the bucket out and you've got a whole bucket of crabs.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

And there's going to be one crab that doesn't want to be in the bucket so that crab starts climbing out of that bucket...



Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

And there will be other crabs that pull that crab down and say this is where you need to be, don't leave us.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

Er, so you do have some of that, that cultural normalcy as you may, that can cause a lack of self confidence.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

And that, it's such a subtle thing that you, you don't notice it but you've got to be, you know, aware of it and it happens in families as well. Erm, you know, where maybe a parent, when their child was very, very young, decides "My child is going to be a Nuclear Physicist" or whatever.

And this child wants to be a fashion designer and the parents are forcing them to go the wrong way and they can't succeed because it's not their men, their forte.

Virginia:

Right.

Stuart:

And if they were allowed to do what their calling was then their confidence would be there all the time but the parents are saying, pushing them down, holding them down because of their agenda and it's a subtle thing, it's not planned that we're going to hurt the child. We think that we're doing the best but we're not actually helping we are causing a lack of confidence in many ways.

Virginia:



We are. And a good example of that is Vera Wang. She's a great fashion designer. Have you heard of her?

Stuart:

I've heard of Vera Wang, yeah. I don't wear her clothes but (laughs)

Virginia:

So, I don't know whether she was pushed or forced but I know she was an olympic skater for a while...

Stuart:

Yeah

Virginia:

And she didn't make the team. She failed at skating for the olympic team. Her story shows that she failed at that.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Ja.

Virginia:

And then at the age of forty is when he decided to change careers and become a fashion designer and that is really where she needed to be all along.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

But she spent so much time in another arena trying to make that work for her and it didn't. So when she started her fashion design world she, she just ran with it.

Stuart:



Yeah, because it's now a big release of energy and freedom isn't it? It's not, sort of, forcing yourself to do something which is not, you know, suited to you. And it's nothing to do with intelligence, it's to just do with "This is my calling. This is what I'm here to do." and some people are here for 'this' and some people are here for 'that'.

But if you can find that calling then your confidence just explodes because now everything just works doesn't it? It's not a fight anymore.

Virginia:

Right.

And I think she fought for everything she had in the skating world and she just wasn't making what she had expected to make. When she switched to something that worked much better for her and she's done a phenomenal job.

Stuart:

Well, this fighting is, is also exhausting isn't it?

Virginia:

Yah

Stuart:

Very, very, exhausting so you can never perform at your peak if you're always fighting or something. And, you know, that can also affect your relationships with your family, with your friends, with your coach, with everybody around you because 'something' just doesn't work. Something's not right.

Virginia:

Right.

Well, and what I have found, at least in America, and I didn't ask these questions when I lived in Europe, is we don't teach young children and most adults to create personal mission statements.

Stuart:

I don't remember anything of that when I was at school... (laughs) so - I don't, you know, I don't even remember being taught how to communicate and, you know, these



vital things seem to be missed because we, we, we're focussed on a certain aspect of education only.

Virginia:

Right,

So, so, I believe if each individual from the age of five to a hundred and twenty would sit down and figure out what their mission is in life, erm, and it doesn't have to be anything really, really complicated. I know a young kid whose mission in life is to be a force for good.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

That's what they want to do.

My mission in life is to be an inspiration for others.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

And that can take many different forms, but if I am doing something in my life that doesn't fit my mission then I am not going to spend my time doing that.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

And, as you say, it doesn't have to be that complicated because if you, if you try to make it too complicated then you start getting the negativity because you're not succeeding. you know.

So if you say, erm, a child has to, you know, it's mission is a force for good - how many millions of ways can he manifest that?

And you know, almost everything he does he can then get rewarded because he's fulfilling his mission in some way.



Virginia:

Correct.

You know, the story that goes along with that is this, this young child decided he wanted to be a force for good and he had a day that he was behaving very badly to his mother.

And when his father came home from work his mother's like "You need to deal with him" and so this kid came into the room with all these excuses why he was terrible that day.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

And the father said "I've one question for you. If your mission in life is being a force for good, how did any of those actions get you to your mission?"

Stuart:

Mm hmmm, and that stopped it dead (laughs)

Virginia:

It stopped it dead, but the child had no real comeback to that.

Stuart:

No.

Virginia:

Er, no.

And I see that work for children, young adults and older adults. We, we lose, especially in our daily routines, we lose who we are and we run to the grocery store and we run to the, these children's events and we work long days at work. And we're trying to juggle cleaning our house and seeing our parents and all of that - and through that, who are we?

Stuart:



Mm hmmm.

And this is, this is the thing. We, we forget, we get lost in daily life and we forget, you know, who we are and how we can, can still do all these things but be the force for good or be something else. How we can just do one little thing to touch someone's life.

If we, you know, just imagine you go into the store and you make somebody smile by something you do, then you've been a force for good and it affects you in, in so many ways because you feel good because you've made somebody smile, and it's such a small thing but it's such a big thing.

Virginia:

Yah, and you've taught me enough to know it's those micro-moments that you must embrace and take advantage of because I think it's those are the moments that change your life.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

I truly believe that.

I was working with a couple earlier this week and I said you have to, you know, really engage in a specific moment and be fully present in that moment and it might last three or four seconds but it will change your relationship today, tomorrow and the next day because you are truly present.

And in today's world with all the technology distractions and how busy our schedules are I think we forget to be present for ourselves in those moments.

Stuart:

Yeah, because we're more focussed on the external...

Virginia:

Mm, hmm.

Stuart:



We're not focussed on ourselves. We don't have a sense of self a lot of the times because everything is revolving around, as you say, technology, busy, rushing here - "I've got the kids to take here, I've got these kids to take there, I've got to do this and this and this and then juggle about five hundred things..." - and we don't take that time, and, you, you know, it doesn't have to be a long time it's a few seconds maybe, a few moments just to...

Virginia:

Yah

Stuart:

...to take for ourselves and then everything is, is much better when we do that isn't it? We can think about how we made somebody smile or how 'this' happened and we did something for somebody and then all of a sudden the perspective changes.

Virginia:

Yah.

So there is a story that hit the news recently of a young man who decided he wanted to give out a flower that day. I don't know why.

So he went and got a sunflower and went to his local coffee shop and when he went into the coffee shop he handed this woman a flower and she immediately started crying.

And he found out that it was the anniversary of her husband's passing and she believed the flower came from him.

Stuart:

That's a wonderful story and you know it's amazing that he...

Virginia:

It's a wonderful story but how much effort did that really take for him?

Stuart:

Nothing. But, you know, the other thing that gets me is the timing. How did he know to give this flower to her on that time?



There's something bigger in some ways isn't there?

Virginia:

There is, but what I took away from that is he had a personal mission, which I love, and he was really present in that moment and that will be a moment that she cherishes for a really long time...

Stuart:

And him.

Virginia:

...And he cherishes.

Stuart:

Yeah.

And it, it reminds me of another story I read, er, and I can't remember how long ago - it wasn't too long ago, there was supermarket checkout assistant, you know, the packer in the States, erm, I don't know which city offhand, but he was a little bit, erm, 'slow', you know, so he was doing menial work because, you know, he didn't have the highest intelligence for some of the other work.

But he noticed that people were miserable and he, he took it upon himself to write a little note or something, in, in, and put it in with the packing - something along the lines of, you know, "I really appreciate you, thank you" or something like that.

And all of a sudden people started reading these and recognising it came from him and they wanted to go to his checkout. And all the managers saw this big queue (laughs) and they tried to get the people to go to the other checkouts and they said "No. We want to go here..." - they found out it was because of this guy who made them feel special, you know, in such a mundane situation.

So it doesn't have to be a big thing. In fact it doesn't need to be a big thing does it? I, it, it's just the small things we have to focus on that make the big moments.

Virginia:

Well, and, and how do you think it made him feel? When the line was so long the people were there for him.



Stuart:

For him, yah, because he's probably never had that before, you know, cos he was, you know, probably treated a little bit badly because he wasn't um, the same as everybody else and that's, that's the problem isn't it?

Virginia:

It is.

And I don't know that any of that changed his ability to pay his bills...

Stuart:

No.

Virginia:

His, his ability to get a girlfriend or, or...

Stuart:

No. I think it, he just realised that he could be that force for good, you know, and that's the thing that you keep saying isn't it?

Just that moment. He just thought it was a good thing to do, just to write this little note to say 'Thank you' because he appreciated them and he wanted to show them.

And that little thing is such a big effect. It changes the whole world that we're living in.

Virginia:

Yeah, yeah, so that, that is really one of the things that I coach in my business. I want people to know who they are...

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:



Not so much what they need to do for a living. Not so much do they need to be married and have kids and, and go out to the party on Friday night or, or whatever but when nothing else matters what do you want us to remember about you?

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

And that's the thing isn't it? Most of us have got no idea what we're going to be remembered about.

You may have some success driven individuals who want to be the best manager or the best 'this' or reach this level but there's something missing all the way through and that's one of the things which is driving them because they're looking for this... this thing and it's this little thing - that they're appreciated.

Virginia:

Yeah. So, so when I teach some of my clients I say when we get, and I don't mean to be morbid, but when we go to greet your funeral and we remember who you are after you've passed we are not going to say "You sold the most policies, that you were the number one sales person for two years, that's not what's going to come out of our mouths.

Stuart:

No.

Virginia:

What, what's going to come out of our mouth is were they kind and gentle, and did they have a positive effect on his world, or our world, that's what we're going to remember and it is often so lost in what we do.

Stuart:

It is, you know, we don't, we don't think about touching people's hearts and that, that is the thing.

I mean, I think I told you earlier that I went back to the UK a few years ago and I was in a supermarket and the checkout girl smiled at me. And I, I'd forgotten that people in that part of England are very friendly and I looked behind me (laughs) to 'say' "Who's she talking to?"



(Virginia laughs)

No, it was me and I couldn't believe it. It was like "What the...?" and it made my day, it really made me feel special because she took that time to appreciate me. And who am I? She's never seen me before, I've never seen her before. I'm just a customer but she took the moment to smile genuinely, it wasn't one of these fake smiles, it was a real warm smile and, and that made the whole day change for me because somebody took that time.

And that's the important thing...

Virginia:

Yes.

Stuart:

And if she does that for everybody that's what she'll remember, be remembered for - she's the person who makes you smile, who makes you feel special. And that's a very, very good epitaph.

Virginia:

And, she was, she was present in that moment.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

And her ability to be present in that moment changed your confidence levels in yourself...

Stuart:

It did!

Virginia:

And you didn't even know you were struggling with confidence.

Stuart:



Ja, I mean it jus, it just, all of a sudden your chest swells out, your shoulders go back (Virginia laughs) and you think “Somebody appreciates me” (laughs) you know, well, and it’s such a, a, you know, a, a fairly trivial interchange normally but it became the highlight of the day because of one thing.

Virginia:

Yeah.

Stuart:

And that is crucial isn’t it?

Virginia:

So I can talk about confidence being a part of a personality, I can talk about confidence being a part of DNA or hormones or environment or how you were raised or the people around you but I truly believe confidence comes from your mission and your ability to be present in the moment for somebody else.

Stuart:

And, you know, how do you be present in the moment for somebody else?

Virginia:

(Laughs)

Well in America I would say you need to put the cellphones down (both laugh)

Stuart:

I think that, that’s worldwide (both laugh) you know.

Virginia:

Put it down and look the person in the eye and do exactly what that grocery store clerk did and look you in the eye and make sure that the other person in the room only feels like you’re talking to them.

Stuart:

Yeah it’s about...



Virginia:

And then you're truly in the moment.

Stuart:

...showing them that you do appreciate them for what they are.

Virginia:

Yah. And, and, you, I, I do not believe you can do it over the computer or over a cell phone. I mean yeah, you can send a text but to me it's not the same as...

Stuart:

It's not the same, I, I think a text can help sometimes but it's not the same as really being face to face, present with that person because the energy is different isn't it? It's everything that comes in that interchange you know, that's really is...

Virginia:

It is, it is.

So I was lucky enough to go to a, a mental health summit here recently and where all of these experts are in the room from different fields talking about what we can do to create better mental health in, in our society and it really came down to one thing. And that was having a place for people to gather and communicate with one another.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm. And communicate from a genuine level, a genuine place.

Virginia:

Yes.

Yes, yes, we believed it would help the elderly from being feeling lonely, we believed it would help...

Stuart:

Well, on that level and I'm sorry to interrupt, it just reminds me of a study done, I can't remember how long ago but it was quite a few years ago where elderly people who have pets tend to live five years longer because they have that companionship,



they have that communication because very often elderly people feel abandoned don't they?

Virginia:

Well, and, and look what pets do for you.

Pets are present in the moment. You come in after work, what else are they thinking about?

Stuart:

Nothing.

Virginia:

Nothing (laughs) they are present in the moment with you and their mission is to make you feel like the pack, that's their mission and they're going to do whatever it takes to make that happen.

Stuart:

Mm, hmm, they do.

So, i, if we think about confidence again and you know, obviously we've spoken about being present, we've spoken about erm, having a genuine interaction with another person which can boost our confidence as well.

What other things can we do apart from, you know, what you've mentioned already to help build our confidence?

Virginia:

So one of the things that I believe which is hugely helpful in building confidence is journaling.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

And journaling specific things.



Journaling what you were grateful for that day, journaling a random act of kindness which means you're going to hold yourself accountable to doing a random act of kindness and this doesn't have to be you 'gave away a car'.

This can be you smiled at the grocery store clerk and you changed their day.

Stuart:

Yeah, or you opened a door for somebody who had a lot of shopping in their hands or something like that, you know, something small.

Virginia:

Right, right.

And then I also, a part of my daily journal, put in there to annotate what moments was I truly present for.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

And if I can do more than three then great but if I can't do more than three then I better really work on that tomorrow.

Stuart:

Yeah, as long as you don't, erm, the person who's doing it doesn't start beating themselves up because they didn't do it or they weren't able to do it.

And that, that's the danger sometimes, people can be too self critical and say "Oh I didn't do it, I'm not good."

And that's not the purpose is it?

Virginia:

No.

It is absolutely not the purpose.



Everybody is going to have days that, you're not successful at things erm, and for me I set the standard as three a day but if you do one that's one more moment that you have that maybe you wouldn't have gone after to have.

And if you do one a week that's one more moment that you have that maybe you wouldn't have gone after.

Stuart:

And that ties into your gratitude as well...

Virginia:

The mindset to go after it is really what we're looking for.

Stuart:

Ja.

And that ties into the gratitude...

Virginia:

Yeah.

Stuart:

You know, you, you be grateful that you did this one thing which affected somebody and, you know, they both work together and, too many times I find that people are not for themselves.

They don't respect themselves, they don't congratulate themselves for anything they've done well. I mean, very often you say "That was a, you know, that was a great speech you gave."

They say "Ah, it was nothing I made so many mistakes."

Your focus is wrong. You know. Your focus is on the mistakes and how badly you came across. You didn't see because of that how people were changed, how people were moved, how people loved it.

And you did that but you missed it.

So that gratitude is crucial.



Virginia:

It is.

But, but you know what? Our minds are, are set that when we look at history, because of our fight and flight responses we look at where we failed. So we watch a movie and you want to go back and watch portions of that movie more than likely you're going to go back and watch the good portions because you don't want to watch the bad portions.

Stuart:

Yah, and this....

Virginia:

Our minds work exactly the opposite when we go back to what has happened in the past our minds instinctively pull out...

Stuart:

The negative...

Virginia:

...what we do well and what we've failed at.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

And this, this is an unconscious programming isn't it? That's been...

Virginia:

It is. It is

Stuart:

...left in us for thousands of years.

Virginia:



It is.

And so we have almost no control, when we look at our history, not to pull up that replay of all the bad sections. That's why somebody can come off of a stage of a speaking stage and say "I didn't do this and I didn't do that and I didn't do this." instead of looking at what they did do well.

And that's where some of that support system comes in because we need (laughs) somebody else to tell us...

Stuart:

How good we are!

(laughs)

Yeah.

And, you know, it, it comes back to the other thing as well, there's two, two very important lessons that we have to get into our head and it takes time to ingrain them.

Number one is we should be grateful for the mistakes because they're the opportunities to grow. And we've got to focus on that aspect of the mistake.

Virginia:

Yeah.

Stuart:

And the other one is to congratulate ourselves for the things that we can do.

Virginia:

That's exactly it.

Stuart:

Mmm.

Virginia:

That's exactly it.



So our brain works in the reverse when we are, what I refer to as forward focussing, so when we're looking toward the future we're hopeful...

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

And so the journaling, if we didn't, if we look, if we look at what we did today and it wasn't so great we can be focussed forward and be hopeful that tomorrow we can have impact that we didn't have today. And the brain is very positive when it looks to the future.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Yes...

Erm, unless you're focussed on failure (laughs) then, you know, then we have, but again it's that, that programming and it's the habits we have to form to change that, that past programming...

Virginia:

Yes

Stuart:

...and, you know, we have to do it in small ways not big ways,

Virginia:

We do.

Stuart:

...because the big ways are too much.

Virginia:

Yeah.



Stuart:

But if you can just, as you say, write down one thing 'I did that made someone smile or, or was good for someone else' and you keep doing that then you, you start changing your thinking and start focussing on looking for the good things.

Virginia:

And there's something to be said about taking this big brain that we all have and making sure that we are programming it to look for the good things.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

It will become easier and easier and easier as the days go by...

Stuart:

Of course, yes.

Virginia:

...to produce that and to look for that.

Yes.

Stuart:

So we start small and we get big. (laughs)

And that's, you know, that really is the, erm, one of the cruxes of self confidence isn't it? Is recognising how good you are.

I mean, we go back to the baby who can't walk...

Virginia:

Mm hmmm.

Stuart:



We don't think about the difficulties it is, you know, how difficult it is to walk.

All the little movements, all the micro muscle movements, the balance, the whole thing. We just take it for granted and we dismiss it as we do with so many other skills we've got.

But if you journal about the good points, about the things you've done well today and, you know, how you've touched people and things like that, you start focussing on all these good things.

And you don't dismiss that.

You know, you say "Ok I can walk - that's a great thing. I can actually walk." because some people can't...

Virginia:

Yeah.

Stuart:

And you know, that, you know, you don't realise unless you're in that situation or whether you work with those type of people how big a problem that is for some

Virginia:

Yeah

Stuart:

So you focus on these little things about yourself and, it's not in a boastful way, it's in a self congratulatory way that you are grateful that you have been able to learn this and that it's a skill you have and then you can start affecting other people with this wonderful sort of new energy that you start developing.

And then you write it down again because you've done it now, you've helped somebody.

(laughs)

Virginia:

Yeah.



I, I will, I will tell you one of the things I also teach is nobody in this world, even if you are a twin, or a triplet, nobody in this world has your perspective.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

And that perspective is so valuable, if we all had the same perspective and we were put on a remote island and we were told to survive we would all die.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

Because all of our skills are the same and we don't know how to pool off of one another.

But if we all come in with different perspectives and we're able to communicate with one another we can create a thriving community.

So I truly believe, each individual comes, comes so special with their experiences and their DNA and their personality that is so needed in this world. No matter if they think they've failed their whole life or they think they're overly successful, for me it comes down to their perspective as unique and we need it.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Yeah, and it's, it's this thing, communication, again. Because we're not taught to communicate in a genuine way, we're not taught you know, what communication really means, and it's one of the subjects I feel should be in school.

We should be taught to communicate properly and understand what communication is and unfortunately it's not. And we have to fumble and struggle through life to understand what communication is.

And some people don't ever find out.



Virginia:

Well, and employers today are struggling even more so now because employees are not coming in with those, what we refer to as soft skills, and communication is one of them, because we're doing almost all of our communication electronically.

We don't know how to fit into a staff meeting and really kick ideas around with one another any more.

Stuart:

Yeah, I mean, it reminds me the other day, I mean, I went out with my wife and a couple of her friends and there were eight people at the table, the dinner table and only one person didn't have a phone in their face.

And that was me (laughs)

Everyone else was, their phone was in their face and they're eating, talking, playing on the phone at the same time and I, I, I, I, looked, I, I, thought this is not right! There's something very wrong with this whole picture.

And it's not unique, as you say it's a worldwide phenomena

Virginia:

It is.

Stuart:

And Japan, you know, they, they've, ahh, I can't remember the term now but they've got a lot of twenty-five to thirty year old pe, erm, er, children parents have got a lot of, you know, obviously 25 to 30 year old children who are trapped in their houses because of this inability to communicate.

They don't go out, they just focus on the computer and they communicate by quter, computer and they don't know how to talk to a real person.

And they won't go out.

And there's a term they've coined for it and I can't remember what it is but there's something like a million people that they've recognised. And that's a frightening, you know, thought. A very frightening thought.

Virginia:



And for me it's very frightening because I don't see how the majority of those people are going to be able to live out their mission as individuals. And how they will ever really feel a part of society.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Well they, obviously, they're not part of society are they because they're (laughs), they're living in their little cave, and their little dream world, you know, their fantasy world of the, whatever the computer game or whatever it is and that's a... not good.

Virginia:

And, and our world is, is missing them, you know, there's a quote, and I'm not going to get it right, that the majority of our ideas are found in the cemetery.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

Because the person never communicates those ideas to somebody else because of fear or inability to communicate or self-confidence and so they go to their grave with the ideas that could impact our world.

And I think of these millions of people that you've just described that are now spending their day behind a computer - what is our world missing from them?

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

And this is the thing and you'll recognise that everybody has something good in them to share with everybody else.

And that can affect us in a positive way.

Virginia:

Right.



You know, even some of the worst of our society, erm, you know, and I, and I believe I told you that we have a jail not that far from here that houses some of the worst criminals in the world.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

Those folks give me value because they help me determine what's good and evil in this world.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

And their perspective I need to have in my world so I can assess my world differently.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

And it's, it's...

Virginia:

I don't know that I want them living next door. (laughs)

Stuart:

No. But it's, it's the ability to take that lesson and to see that there's something good even about the worst person because 'I can learn something from it in, in some way'.

And, you know, not just condemn the person and get rid of them out of there because you're missing that learning, as you say, that, that point that they have. And then sometimes, eve, as you say, even the worst people can have a lot of goodness for somebody else in, in certain circumstances.

So, so there, there's always some good in people but...

Virginia:



There is, there is.

Stuart:

...it's not always easy to find it sometimes.

Virginia:

No, and, and there's good in very, very harsh situations.

I remember when I walked the beaches of Normandy...

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

...and thinking about all the lives that were lost there and, you know, everything that the world lost on those beaches.

But then I think: look at the courage that they showed us, and look at the ability to stay with the mission, look at their ability to fight for what they thought was right.

And the world needs to know that story.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

We need to know it existed and it, it has impacted me and I didn't even know those people on that beach.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Obviously, you know, (laughs) because that was a few years before you were, you were gifted to us.

(Both laugh)



So Virginia, I'm just looking at the time and we are getting a little bit over, over the time so...

Virginia:

OK.

Stuart:

I know, you have a book...

Virginia:

I do, I do.

Stuart:

... and I'd like you to tell us a little bit about the book.

Virginia:

So I have a, a couple of books. I've one book that was just printed, it's in my hands, it's called 'Creating Your Life - Mindfulness and Meditation' and it's several authors from around the world that have given us ideas how to move our life forward.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

But I am also writing my own book about, it's called 'The Truth About Trauma' and it's about my story and the lessons that I have learned that I want to give back to this world so that when they're going through struggles and change that they have somebody that's been there and done that and can help them through, er, what they're going through.

So that book isn't really so much my story as it is a 'How To Overcome'.

Stuart:

And where can people get more of you? (both laugh) I mean,



Virginia:

They can get more of me through Facebook. I do a lot on Facebook, my Facebook page is [facebook.com/triumphaftertrauma](https://www.facebook.com/triumphaftertrauma) and they can also get me through my website which is www.triumphaftertrauma.org

Both of those places are great.

The can also reach me via email at virginia@triumphaftertrauma.org which is my first name - Virginia at Triumph After Trauma dot org.

Stuart:

So that's, is that with a capital 'V' or small 'v' - v i r g i n i a ?

Virginia:

I don't know that it matters...

Stuart:

OK.

Virginia:

I think they'll send it to me either way.

Stuart:

Ok, so what I'll do is I'll put it in the transcript and the show notes - I'll make sure that people get the links because, you know, it saves them trying to write things down now.

And what is it you actually offer to people who come to Facebook?

Virginia:

So one of the things that people that come to my Facebook page, Mondays through Fridays, my time I do a two minute inspirational video that they can get every day for free.

Stuart:



Mm hmmm.

Virginia:

And I also do a Weds, midday entrepreneurial class that brings in experts from around the world that will educate us on their expertise.

Stuart:

Mm hmmm. When is...

Virginia:

And that is also 100% free, and if that class doesn't match their timezone they can plug it in on a replay.

Stuart:

Ok, so your timezone is...?

Virginia:

Mountain time in the United States.

Stuart:

Ok, Mountain time in the United States, ok.

Virginia:

So it's 11am on a Weds, Mountain Time is what I refer to as the entrepreneurial success academy.

Stuart:

Ok, well that sounds really, you know, exciting so.... it's, that's going to be, maybe, I can't remember now but it's eleven o'clock or twelve o'clock at night.

Anyway I can, I can...

Virginia:

(laughs)



Stuart:

...have a look for the replay.

(both laugh)

Virginia:

Yes, do, the replay.

So you go to the same links and all you do is hit play and you won't get me live.

Stuart:

Yeah, so all the information is on the Facebook page for that?

Virginia:

Yes.

And there's plenty more coming down the pike. I want to do a, there's just plenty more coming so people tune in they will see more and more free stuff that we will put out there for them to tune into.

Stuart:

That's great.

And when do you expect the book to be published so we can buy the book as well, is that going to be...

Virginia:

Ummm...

Stuart:

...next year sometime?

Virginia:

Yeah, next year sometime. I would expect it to be late spring.

Stuart:



Ok. Because I understand, I've got two books in the pipe line but (laughs) I haven't got a deadline for them yet so...

(both laugh)

We get, too many things

Virginia:

I'd like to think it will be earlier than that, erm, erm, I'm not, not so sure it will be.

Stuart:

But you'll, you know, if the guys go to Facebook they'll be able to find out when it's live anyway so - or they get in contact with you they'll be able to find out.

Virginia:

They certainly will.

Erm, and I am all about collaboration and there will be plenty more that comes out to help support individuals and businesses move their lives forward.

Stuart:

Ok.

Well, Virginia, you know, I don't want to be a killjoy but it is getting on and...

Virginia:

I know it is...

Stuart:

I know you've got things to do.

Virginia:

We've go to go.

Stuart:



Yes.

And er, I'm really, really grateful for everything you've given us at the moment. I mean it's been a wonderful interview.

I've really enjoyed it.

Virginia:

Thank you.

Stuart:

I think the viewers and the listeners are going to have a treat, you know, when they listen to it.

Virginia:

Thank you.

Stuart:

So it's going to be great, you know, obviously we'll keep in touch and things like that.

Virginia:

Yah.

Stuart:

But, you know, thank you so much for everything that you've shared, really.

Virginia:

Thank you for what you're doing, you are one of my gems overseas, and...

Stuart:

Thank you.

Virginia:

...maybe one day we'll get to meet in person.



Stuart:

Yeah, who knows, who knows? The world is a small place.

I mean I can remember I was travelling in the middle of somewhere in Africa and I met a guy who lived just round the corner from me. And I've got no idea he's there, so...

You never know where you're going to bump into somebody these days.

Virginia:

You don't, you don't.

So thank you very much to your viewers and to you for your time and, and, take care.

Stuart:

OK. Thanks a lot Virginia.

Virginia:

Bye.

Stuart:

Bye, bye.

